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Although different philosophical and methodological approaches underlying materials for teaching Standard English (SE) to Black English (BE) speakers have now received some attention, one aspect of methodology for which there is no specific discussion is the order in which SE features should be presented. The author suggests and discusses five sociolinguistic factors that should be used as a basis for determining the most relevant order of lessons. Precedence should be given to (1) the most socially diagnostic variables, (2) the most general rules, (3) grammatical variables over phonological variables, (4) speech patterns of general social significance over those of only regional significance, and (5) the most frequently occurring items. When determining the order of lessons, each BE feature must be considered in terms of the total configuration of sociolinguistic principles. The author views the determination of order in terms of a sociolinguistic matrix, which he presents. (DO)

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SOCIOLINGUISTIC IMPLICATIONS FOR EDUCATIONAL SEQUENCING

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Within the last several years the teaching of Standard English to Black English speakers (i.e. the variety of English spoken by lower socio-economic class Negroes) has been of growing concern to urban educators. Subsequently, we have recently witnessed an avalanche of materials for teaching Standard English in an urban setting. A casual survey of materials is sufficient to observe that there are various philosophical and methodological approaches which characterize these materials. Furthermore, the features dealt with in these lessons and the order in which the lessons are presented vary significantly.

Although the different philosophical and methodological approaches underlying materials have now received some attention, one aspect of methodology for which there is no specific discussion is the order in which Standard English features should be presented. This failure may stem from the assumption that it is common knowledge which features of Standard English should be given precedence in teaching Black English speakers. However, if this were the case, one would expect that all materials would conform to a similar pattern of sequencing, a situation which does not exist.

Another possible reason for the failure to deal with pedagogical sequencing may stem from the assumption that the ordering of lessons is irrelevant, that any order convenient to the pedagogue is satisfactory. Several reasons can be suggested to challenge this assumption. First of all, both objective and subjective evidence (see Wolfram 1969; Shuy, Baratz and Wolfram 1969) suggest that not all features of Black English have the same social connotations. There are some features which immediately categorize the socio-economic class of the speaker; others, however, may correlate with ethnicity but have little or no social significance within the black community. The fact that all features of Black English do not have equal social conno-

tations suggests that some should be given precedence over others in the acquisition of Standard English. Another reason for maintaining the relevancy of lesson sequencing is motivational. Students are much more aware of the social consequences of Black English vis-à-vis Standard English than they have been given credit for (see Shuy, Baratz and Wolfram 1969), and the precedence of minor rather than major differences between dialects may discourage students at an early age in their acquisition of Standard English. A final reason is quite practical. The realization that any course in Standard English will probably not cover as much material as would be desireable means that some features should take precedence over others in the lesson material. One way of programming this precedence into the lesson material is through the sequencing of lessons.

Having suggested several reasons for the relevancy of pedagogical sequencing, what criteria may be used in determining the relative order of the lessons? Several sociolinguistic factors can be suggested as a basis for determining the most relevant order of lessons.

4. Social diagnosticity of linguistic variables

Since the purpose of teaching Standard English is to assist students in adopting a dialect which is not socially stigmatized, a primitive consideration in the sequencing of materials must be the way in which social groups are separated from one another on the basis of linguistic features (i.e. the social diagnosticity of linguistic items). As was stated above, all linguistic features do not correlate with social status in the same way. Some features set apart social groups from one another much more discretely than others. Recently, I have suggested (see Wolfram 1969) that it is useful to distinguish between gradient and sharp social stratification of linguistic features. Gradient stratification refers to a progressive increase

in the frequency of occurrence of a variant between social groups without a clearly defined difference between contiguous social groups. The incidence of post-vocalic r in the black community is an example of gradient stratification. The following diagram illustrates the differences in r absence for four social classes of Negroes in Detroit, upper-middle (UMN), lower-middle (LMN), upper-working (UWN), and lower-working (LWN) class Negroes.

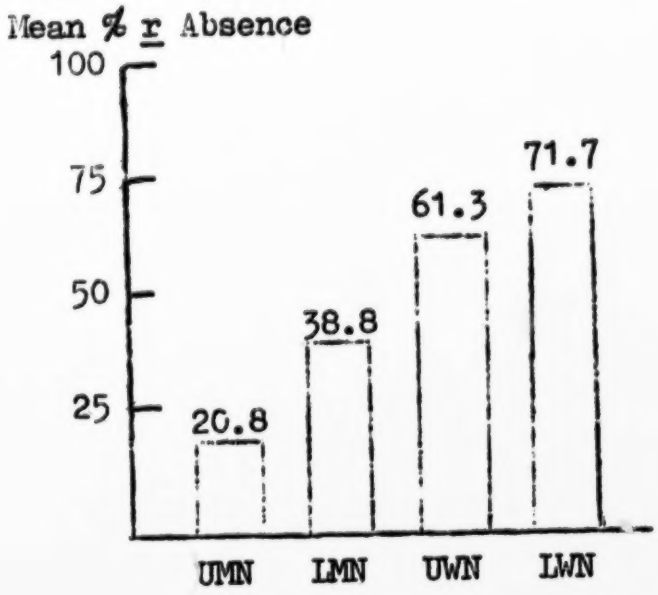

Fig. 1. Post-vocalic r Absence: An Example of "Gradient" Stratification

One observes that there is a progressive increase in the absence of post-vocalic r between the four social groups; none of the groups are discretely differentiated on the basis of r. But there are other variables which indicate a sharp demarcation between contiguous social classes (i.e. sharp stratification), such as the absence of third-person singular, present-tense-s. Note the incidence of -s third person singular absence in Fig. 2.

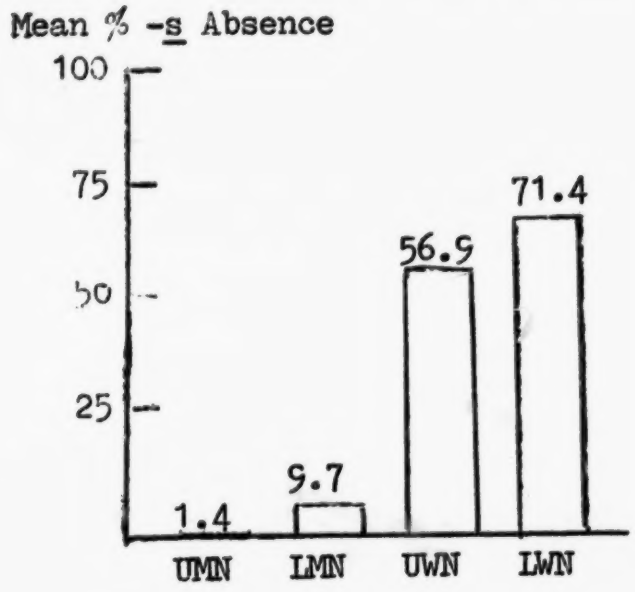

Fig. 2. Third Person Singular -s Absence: An Example of "Sharp" Stratification

In contrast to the absence of post-vocalic r, we observe that the middle class groups are sharply differentiated from the working class groups by the incidence of -s. Contiguous social groups (in this case, lower-middle and upper-working classes) reveal significant differences in the incidence of -s third-person singular. We conclude that linguistic features revealing sharp stratification are of greater social significance than those showing gradient stratification. From a social viewpoint, then, materials dealing with sharply stratified linguistic features should precede those dealing with gradiently stratified features.

Perhaps more important than the objective stratification of linguistic features is the subjective reactions toward these features. Labov (1964: 102) has suggested that the subjective evaluation of socially diagnostic linguistic features can be classified into three basic types:

> indicators, which show social variation but usually not stylistic variation, and have little affect upon the listener's judgment of the social status of the speakers

markers, which show both social and stylistic variation and have consistent effects upon the conscious or unconscious judgment of the speaker's status by the listener

stereotypes, which are the overt topics of social comment in the speech community, and may or may not correspond to actual linguistic behavior.

The different levels of subjective reaction to socially diagnostic linguistic features have definite implications for the ordering of materials. Materials should start with those features which are on the most conscious level of awareness, the stereotyped features. In terms of objective stratification, stereotyped features generally show sharp rather than gradient stratification. Since, as Labov points out, there are a number of stereotyped features which do not correspond to actual sociolinguistic behavior, it must be warned that we are referring to stereotyped features which relate to actual speech. One must also warn that stereotyped features often refer to single items, in which case they would not be given precedence because they do not meet the criterion of rule generality (cf. principle 2). One stereotyped feature of nonstandard speech (both Negro and white) is that of the so-called "double negative" (but more accurately called "multiple negation") such as He didn't do nothing.

The relative social diagnosticity of a particular feature may not only vary from linguistic variable to variable, but within a given variable, based on independent linguistic constraints such as environment, structural type, etc. Take, for example, the absence of the final member of a consonant cluster in word-final position (e.g. Black English /dɛs/ for Standard English 'desk'). This type of pattern affects items in which both members of the cluster are part of the same lexical item (i.e. monomorphemic, as in Black English /gɛs/ for Standard English /gɛst/ 'guest') but also clusters

which result when the addition of the grammatical suffix -ed results in a cluster (i.e. bimorphemic clusters such as Black English /gɛs/ for Standard English /gɛs-t/ 'guessed'). The social significance of these two types are not equal, however. The former type, monomorphemic clusters, reveals a gradient stratification whereas the latter, the bimorphemic clusters, tend to reveal sharp stratification. In terms of social importance, bimorphemic clusters would therefore take precedence over monomorphemic. Likewise, in the analysis of copula absence among Negro speakers, there are certain types of constructions in which the absence of a copula is much less socially significant than others. The absence of a copula with the intentive future gonna (e.g. They gonna go now) is commonly used by middle class Negro speakers although they typically do not reveal copula absence in other types of constructions such as predicative nominals, adjectives, and locatives. It is plain that the presence of a copula with gonna should follow the teaching of copula with other types of constructions (e.g. predicate adjective such as he nice) in preparing the lesson materials on copula.

2. The generality of rules

Another important factor in determining the relative order of materials is the generality of the rule(s) involved in the realization of a particular Black English feature. Some nonstandard forms affect only a small subset of words or a single item whereas others involve general rules that operate on the form of every sentence of a particular structural type. Labov and Cohen (1969: 1) note that:

> it is plain that the more general rules should be introduced first in a teaching program, no matter how prominent and striking the isolated items may be.

The more general the rule, the earlier it should be introduced in the materials. For example, the nonstandard use of multiple negation affects

all negative sentences with an indefinite, including indefinite pronouns (e.g. He didn't do nothing), determiners (e.g. He didn't have no homework), and adverbs (e.g. He hardly never does his homework). On the other hand, the Black English use of existential it is as a correspondence of Standard English there is (e.g. Black English It is a lot of trouble on that street) only concerns one item. Standard English lesson materials will probably deal with both of these nonstandard features; however, based on the generality of rules governing the nonstandard usage, it should be obvious that multiple negation will appear in the earliest stages of lessons but "existential it" in the later lesson materials.

3. Phonological versus grammatical variables

In many current materials designed to teach Standard English, it has sometimes been assumed that it makes little difference whether one begins with phonological or grammatical variables. Therefore, some materials focus on phonological features before grammatical features while others reverse the order. There is good reason to suggest that the teaching of Standard English to Black English speakers should focus on grammatical features before phonological features. In the first place, the social significance of phonological and grammatical features tend to differ. In my description of four phonological and four grammatical variables, it was pointed out that there is an important difference between the social diagnosticity of phonological and grammatical variables (Wolfram 1969). Grammatical features tend to show sharp stratification whereas grammatical variables tend to reveal gradient stratification.[2] Three of the four phonological variables investigated reveal gradient stratification, but all four variables which were treated as grammatical indicate sharp stratification.[3] As a general principle then, it is safest to begin with grammatical rather than phonological features.

Another factor favoring the introduction of grammatical features first is the type of differences observed between social groups. The social distribution of grammatical features show that there are qualitative differences between groups; that is, middle class groups often indicate complete absence of certain grammatical variants (such as multiple negation, suffixal -s absence, 'distributive be', etc.) which are present in working class speech. But phonological features most often reveal quantitative differences between social groups. Thus d for potential đ in word-initial position (in such words as then, that, those), the lack of constriction for post-vocalic r (in words like car, beard, mother), the absence of the final member of a consonant cluster (in words like desk, ground, cold) monophthongization of potential upgliding diphthongs (in words like time, ground, boil), and syllable final t for d (in words like good, bad, stupid) all reveal quantitative differences between social groups. Qualitative differences tend to be more socially obtrusive than quantitative differences and therefore should be taught first. In some cases phonological and grammatical patterns intersect with one another to account for certain stigmatized features. We have already seen how this can happen with word-final consonant clusters. To take an example of a somewhat different type, consider the Black English use of invariant be in a sentence such as he be home. There is evidence to consider that this construction is derived from three different sources, two of which are phonological and one grammatical (see Fasold 196[illegible], 1969; Wolfram 1969). Invariant be may be derived from an underlying will be in a sentence such as He be in pretty soon; in a sentence such as If he had a walkie talkie, he be happy it is derived from would be; but in a sentence such as He be busy all the time, it is the realization of a grammatical category unique to the Black English speaker, "distributive be".

Although one may initially assume that all three uses of be are equally stigmatized, there is good reason to suggest that this is not the case. In the first place, the negative formations of these three constructions in Black English are He won't be in in a few minutes, If he had a walkie talkie he wouldn't be happy, and He don't be busy all the time respectively. Only the last example is socially obtrusive to the middle class speaker.

A second reason for suggesting that "distributive be" is more socially stigmatized than the other two uses is that Standard English speakers sometimes produce a contracted form of will be ('ll) and would be ('d) which is phonetically not very different from the first two uses of be. But no Standard English speaker would ever use be in its distributive sense. We thus see that where the intersection of phonological and grammatical patterns takes place, grammatical differences between Standard English and Black English should be given precedence.

4. Regional versus general social significance

Many large Northern urban areas have been drastically restructured within the last 50 years because of the in-migration of Southern Negroes. Due to the extent of the intersectional migration and the segregation patterns of such in-migrants in the North, the speech patterns of many Negroes living in the North have not been adapted to a Northern dialect of English. In a Northern locale, some features which are acceptable Southern speech patterns have been transformed into class and ethnic patterns. Thus, in a city such as Detroit, "r-lessness", the neutralization of the I/ɛ contrast before nasals, and monophthongization[4] of potential upgliding diphthongs have taken on a social significance even though they are acceptable patterns used by the middle class in certain parts of the South. On the other hand, there are a number of factors which have social significance

regardless of the regional locale in which they are found. Thus, the absence of third-person singular present tense -s, the use of invariant be, and multiple negation are socially diagnostic in all regions of the United States.

Several reasons can be suggested why features having general social significance should be dealt with before those whose social significance is regionally restricted (e.g. just in a Northern city). First, those features which reveal general social significance tend to be more socially diagnostic than those showing only regional significance. In terms of our distinction between sharp and gradient stratification, one observes that in Northern cities, acceptable Southern features reveal gradient rather than sharp stratification among the Negro population. But general nonstandard features often show sharp stratification. We thus see that our distinction between features showing regional and general social significance correlates in an important way with relative social diagnosticity of items.

Second, in terms of the widest possible audience of students for lesson materials, general features should be given precedence over regional features. Recent investigations of Black English in a number of big cities in the United States indicate that there is a "common core" of Black English characteristic of lower socio-economic Negroes in different regions. This observation means that lesson materials may be produced which can be used in more than one region. However, to develop materials for the broadest possible use, the general socially diagnostic features should be given precedence over the regionally significant items. By placing these regionally significant features in later stages of lessons (if they are to be included at all) their relative importance can be appropriately diminished, (i.e. they can easily be excluded where not applicable or, in terms of time limitations,

where lessons can most conviently be eliminated or condensed). Although one might think that this principle is obvious to those responsible for developing lessons, many current materials are surprisingly negligent in this regard. Some teachers have taken far too much interest in relatively minor features such as the monophthongization of upgliding diphthongs (e.g. /tahm/ 'time', /bɔh/ 'boy') and the neutralization of the I/ɛ contrast before nasals (e.g. /pIn/ 'pin' or 'pen'), although these are quite acceptable patterns used by middle class Southerners. In justification of such interest, some teachers explain that if such differences are not taught, the students will be unable to discriminate between such words as pin and pen. While this may certainly be the case (apart from contextual disambiguation), this common type of "interdialectal homophony" (i.e. distinguishable words in one dialect are indistinguishable in another dialect) is no need for concern. It is a common phenomenon of dialects which have kept dialectologists busy and non-linguists amused for some time now. The same teachers who may attempt to spend inordinate amounts of time drilling students to contrast pin and pen may make no distinction between cot and caught in their own speech without ever having noticed it. Although it may sound unnecessarily judgmental, the preoccupation with such items as pin and pen, while well-intentioned, may ultimately be traced to dialectal ethnocentrism.

5. The relative frequency of items

A final factor in the determination of lesson sequencing is the relative frequency with which an item or pattern potentially occurs. Some non-standard patterns occur only infrequently during the course of a normal discourse. Even though some of these features may indicate sharp stratification, the infrequency of their occurrence makes them less essential than others in preparing lesson materials. For example, a comparison of the . . .

potential incidence of third-person singular present-tense -s with the possessive marker -s for 48 Detroit informants reveals that the former structural pattern is over four times as numerous as the latter (see Wolfram 1969). It is therefore understandable why many people are more consciously aware of the absence of -s on third person forms than they are of the absence of -s on possessives.

Another example of a relatively infrequent occurring feature is the Black English use of been as an auxiliary in active sentence such as The boy been ate the pie. Although this use of been clearly correlates to social class in the Negro community, the rarity of this type of construction in natural discourse suggests that the non-use of this type of form should only be taught after many other features which occur much more frequently.

6. The intersection of sociolinguistic principles in determining the sequencing of materials

When determining the order of lessons, each Black English feature must be considered in terms of the total configuration of sociolinguistic principles. The fact that a particular item reveals sharp stratification is, in itself, not adequate for including it in the preliminary stages of the lessons. Nor is the distinction of frequent versus infrequent patterns sufficient reason for determining order by itself. Only when the intersection of the various principles is considered can an adequate justification for sequencing be established. The determination of order may be viewed in terms of a sociolinguistic matrix. In Fig. 3, a number of features cited as examples in the above discussion are evaluated in terms of such a matrix. For the most part, the evaluation is based on a binary opposition (e.g. either an item is considered frequent (+) or infrequent (-)). Where binary judgments cannot be made (e.g. the intersection of phonology and grammar or different levels of social significance based on subcategories of a variable) this is indicated by (±).

Black English Feature	sharp stratification(+) gradient stratification(-)	general rule (+) non-general rule (-)	grammatical feature (+) phonological feature(-)	general significance(+) regional significance(-)	frequent occurrence(+) infrequent occurrence(-)
-s third person singular (e.g. he go)	+	+	+	+	+
multiple negation (e.g. didn't do nothing)	+	+	+	+	+
-s possessive (e.g. man hat)	+	+	+	+	-
invariant be (e.g. he be home)	+	+	+	+	+
copula absence (e.g. he nice)	+	+	-	+	+
been auxiliary in active sentence (e.g. he been ate the food)	+	-	+	+	-
existential it (e.g. It is a whole lot of people)	+	-	+	+	+
word-medial and final ð and θ-(e.g. /tuf/ 'tooth')	+	+	-	+	+
word-final consonant clusters (e.g. /gɛs/ 'guest' and 'guessed')	±	+	-	+	+
word-initial ð (e.g. /dɛn/ 'then')	-	+	-	+	+
monophthongization (e.g. /tahm/ 'time')	-	+	-	-	+
post-vocalic r and l (e.g. /cah/ 'car')	-	+	-	-	+
syllable-final d (e.g. /bɛht/ 'bad')	-	+	-	-	+
I/ before nasals (e.g. /pIn/ 'pin' or 'pen')	-	-	-	-	-

The way the matrix is set up, the more (+) evaluations a particular feature has, the earlier it should be introduced in the lesson material. This means that items given a (+) rating for all of the sociolinguistic principles should be introduced at the earliest stage, those with more (+) than (-) ratings at the next stage, and those with more (-) than (+) ratings at a still later stage. Such features as -s third person singular, multiple negation, and invariant be (particularly its grammatical source) should be treated in the earliest lessons. A next stage should deal with such features as word-medial and final θ and consonant clusters, whereas features such as I/ɛ contrast before nasals, syllable final d, and post-vocalic r should clearly be treated in the later lessons.

In sum, I have attempted to show how sociolinguistic considerations have important implications for teaching Standard English to Black English speakers. The application of these five principles can only increase the sociolinguistic relevancy of Standard English programs and improve their efficiency.

FOOTNOTES

[1]Shuy, Baratz and Wolfram (1969) show that lower socio-economic class spakers who use stigmatized variants often have the same low opinion of these forms middle class speakers who do not use these forms. Therefore the label "stigmatized" refers to a working class as well as a middle class evaluation of such forms.

[2]McDavid (1965:15) notes that "the surest social markers in American English are grammatical forms, and any teaching program should aim, first of all, at developing a habitual command of the grammar of Standard English".

[3]This does not mean that ALL socially diagnostic grammatical features reveal sharp stratification or that ALL phonological features show gradient stratification since research does not show this to be the case. For example, the Black English correspondence of Standard English θ and ð in certain positions, which is f and v respectively, shows sharp stratification. On the other hand, the Black English use of pronominal apposition (e.g. The man, he did it.) is a grammatical feature which reveals gradient stratification.

[4]Monophthongization is technically not quite correct for the pronunciation of 'time' as [taɔm] instead of [taym] . The distinction actually is found in the direction of the glide; in the former case there is a central glide and in the latter a high front glide. For convenience in this paper, the central gliding variant will be referred to as monophthongization.

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